



Joint Field Office
75 N. Fair Oaks Ave., 3rd Floor
Pasadena, CA 91103



FEMA

Recovery News

November 21, 2007
DR-1731-CA NR-44
FEMA/OES: 626-431-3178
SBA: 916-216-9915

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE EXTENDED

PASADENA, Calif. – Residents who suffered damages from the Southern California wildfires in the affected counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, San Diego and Ventura now have until January 9, 2008 to apply for federal and state disaster assistance.

“During the holidays we know that many have issues to deal with, and it is our hope that extending the deadline until after the New Year will allow a little extra time for those who haven’t registered for assistance,” said Federal Coordinating Officer Mike Hall.

There are two easy ways to begin the application process. Those with Internet access can register at www.fema.gov or they can call the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) toll-free number at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. Phone lines are open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week until further notice. Multilingual operators also are available to answer calls.

“We are pleased with the quick response and approval of our request for an extension,” OES Director Henry Renteria. “Extending the deadline will put less of a burden on fire victims as well as the agencies striving to assist them in the recovery process.”

Disaster assistance can include: funding for temporary disaster housing assistance; grants to help with housing repairs and personal property damages and losses; U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest disaster loans for individuals and business owners; and assistance for other disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance.

FEMA coordinates the federal government’s role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.

SBA is the federal government’s primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.

Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan, and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA’s temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.

###